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Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

***Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (continued)* (A/61/525/Add.6 and Add.7 and A/61/640/Add.1 and Add.2)**

1. **Mr. Thatchaichawalit** (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and the United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (A/61/525/Add.6), recalled that BINUB had been established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1719 (2006), initially for one year beginning on 1 January 2007. In order to facilitate the mission's start-up, at the request of the Controller a commitment authority of $8,538,700 had been granted to the Secretary-General, with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/249 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2006-2007. That sum, added to the additional requirements for 2007, brought the estimated net total resource requirements for the year to $35,754,800 ($38,209,500 gross).

2. The International Advisory and Monitoring Board, an audit oversight body for the Development Fund for Iraq, had been established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1483 (2003). Although no further extensions of its mandate had originally been expected, the Security Council, in its resolution 1723 (2006), had extended the mandate and membership of the Board until 31 December 2007. The estimated net total resource requirements of the Board for 2007, $162,500 ($175,500 gross), would be accommodated from the $156,800 unencumbered balance against the 2006 appropriation for the Board, and from existing provisions for special political missions, as necessary. The General Assembly was invited to take the action described in paragraph 19 of document A/61/525/Add.6 in connection with the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and the United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board.

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates concerning the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) (A/61/525/Add.7), he recalled that the Security Council, in a statement by its President on 1 December 2006 (S/PRST/2006/49), had noted the request by the signatories to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nepal for United Nations assistance in implementing key aspects of that Agreement and had welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to take action in that regard.

4. The original commitment authority for interim activities in Nepal granted to the Secretary-General with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/249, on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2006-2007, was $9,363,600. By its resolution 1740 (2007), the Security Council had decided to establish the United Nations Mission in Nepal for 12 months, under the leadership of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The original sum, added to the additional requirements for 2007, brought the estimated net total resource requirements for the year to $91,523,300 ($95,632,600 gross). The General Assembly was invited to take the action described in paragraph 139 of document A/61/525/Add.7 in connection with UNMIN.

5. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on estimates in respect of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and the United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (A/61/640/Add.1), said that the Advisory Committee was recommending that $33,080,400 should be appropriated for the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, and that it concurred with the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the costs in 2007 of the United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board, which would be accommodated from the unencumbered balance against the related appropriation for 2006.

6. With regard to the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, the Advisory Committee was concerned that, although the transition of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) to a special political mission had been known for some time, limited numbers of ONUB staff had been retained for

BINUB. In the light of the substantial gap between budgetary assumptions and actual deployment of staff, the Advisory Committee had recommended increases in the delayed deployment factor from 10 to 20 per cent in the case of international staff, and from 5 to 15 per cent in the case of national staff. If the mission achieved faster deployment, that fact should be reflected in the second performance report for the biennium 2006-2007.

7. In addition, having reviewed the proposed staffing of the mission, the Advisory Committee had recommended against the approval of a number of posts proposed by the Secretary-General, for the reasons outlined in its report. The Advisory Committee encouraged gradual replacement of international BINUB staff with national staff wherever possible, and recommended that grade levels in the mission should be kept under review as the handover from ONUB was completed.

8. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on estimates in respect of the United Nations Political Mission in Nepal (A/61/640/Add.2), he said that the Advisory Committee principally advised a reduction of the staffing costs of the Mission, whose proposed structure seemed in many cases to have been driven by the application of a template rather than by an analysis of the Mission's specific needs. The fact that UNMIN was considered a focused mission of limited duration should have had some impact on its intended structure and resources. The Advisory Committee had therefore recommended against approval of a number of the posts proposed by the Secretary-General.

9. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the general temporary assistance requirements for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Political Affairs, for which provision had been made in the UNMIN budget, should instead be met from the existing appropriations under the programme budget for 2006-2007 and reflected, if necessary, in the second performance report for that biennium.

10. **Mr. Thomma** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, said that the European Union recognized the importance of special political missions and their role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. The missions should be able to realize their mandates and fully achieve their goals while efficiently utilizing the resources placed at their disposal by Member States. The European Union regretted the late issuance of the reports in question, which had prevented it from studying them as thoroughly as it would have wished. The European Union, while greatly benefiting from the guidance of the Advisory Committee, would be seeking further clarification on a number of points.

11. The European Union appreciated the achievements and successful completion of the United Nations Operation in Burundi. The establishment of its successor — the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi — was a good example of a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. He congratulated the people of Burundi on their accomplishment and assured them of the European Union's support in the next phase of their peacebuilding efforts.

12. The European Union recognized the importance of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board in overseeing the use of resources of the Development Fund for Iraq. He hoped that it would successfully complete its work during the current year.

13. Lastly, he expressed support for the United Nations Mission in Nepal, which helped Nepal sustain the peace negotiated in the November 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Mission was a focused mission of limited duration and should strive to accomplish its mandate in an efficient manner. In order to avoid overbudgeting, it was important to pay attention to the specific mandate and needs of a mission, rather than applying a template to different field missions. Bearing in mind the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the European Union expected a fruitful exchange of views on those questions in informal consultations.

14. **Ms. Pataca** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group reiterated its long-held view that United Nations efforts to consolidate peace in Burundi were important and noted the proposed structure and resource requirement of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, along with the Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding the staffing of BINUB. It agreed with the Advisory Committee that international staff in that mission must be replaced by national staff as the

situation in the country progressed. The Group would like the Advisory Committee to clarify the rationale for, and possible effects of, the staffing recommendations contained in paragraph 14 of its report (A/61/640/Add.2) from the standpoint of the mission's ability to fulfil its mandate.

15. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal) said that, while his delegation was satisfied with most of the recommendations in the Advisory Committee's report on the United Nations Mission in Nepal (A/61/640/Add.2), it could see little justification, from the point of view of effective and efficient fulfilment of the Mission's mandate, for eliminating a number of posts. As a consequence, it hoped that the Committee would retain them.

16. First, as the non-military ceasefire monitoring functions were important in ensuring that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was implemented effectively at regional level, Nepal wished both of the P-3 Monitoring and Outreach Team leader positions and both of the P-2 Associate Civil Affairs Officer positions to be retained for each of the five regional components of the Civil Affairs Office, as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/525/Add.7). Second, as the role of the P-5 Senior Coordination Officer for the Office of the Special Representative was important, particularly in coordinating the United Nations country team and donor community, his delegation would like it to be retained; it was unconvinced by the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the Chief of Staff in that Office could or should perform the functions in question.

17. His delegation believed that the staffing structure proposed by the Secretary-General was justified by the Mission's monitoring role, the importance of the political process in the country and the fact that difficult terrain and long distances hampered communications and mobility. Proposed resource requirements must be comparable with those of other missions of a similar nature and duration.

18. **Mr. Potts** (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding BINUB, the United Nations representative to the International Advisory and Monitoring Board and UNMIN. The two missions would play a vital role in bringing peace and stability to regions which had experienced a great deal of conflict. In the case of BINUB, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/525/Add.6) could have provided more justification of resource requirements in terms of the mission's expected accomplishments for the year. In the case of UNMIN, it supported the expectation of the Advisory Committee that the Mission's proposed structure and the resource allocation for its various components should be more closely linked to an analysis of its specific needs.

19. **Ms. Kaji** (Japan) said that, although much attention had been devoted to the recent surge in peacekeeping missions, special political missions had experienced a similar surge. The two types of mission could complement each other, but the Committee must examine them carefully, focusing on the link between the logical framework used for results-based budgeting and mission resource requirements.

20. In the case of BINUB, which was intended to develop an effective peacebuilding process in a smooth transition from ceasefire to stability and prosperity, her delegation supported the view of the Advisory Committee that the Mission's staffing structure must take into account the gap between budgetary assumptions and actual deployment. It also supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding the Mission's budget. In the case of UNMIN, the role of which was arms monitoring and election support, her delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the application of one-size-fits-all models to different field missions should be avoided, and supported its recommendations regarding the Mission's budget. Thoughtful planning was needed to prevent duplication and overlaps.

21. **Mr. Hussain** (Pakistan) said that the action taken by the Secretary-General to promote conflict resolution would have far-reaching effects on the countries involved. His delegation hoped that the functions of UNMIN, as described in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/525/Add.7), would be implemented and that the timelines established would be adhered to. However, he had also noted the concerns of the representative of Nepal at the recommended reductions in resources for the Mission. As a regional neighbour of Nepal, Pakistan was committed to supporting it during a critical and sensitive period of transition, and hoped that the allocation of resources would not jeopardize the expected progress. The issue should be explored further in informal consultations.

22. His delegation recalled that concern had regularly been voiced in the General Assembly regarding the allocation of resources for special political missions, and believed that such missions lacked a well defined logical framework. Perhaps the solution lay in applying a results-based management approach to special political missions, in order to determine objectives, establish timelines for accomplishing those objectives and ensure that programme managers were accountable for implementation. Currently, despite the mandates established by the Security Council, implementation of special political missions proceeded from one phase to another without a consistent method, making implementation inadequate and timelines imprecise. The same lack of precision led to missions of a similar character carrying different resource requests. His delegation took the view that outputs must be considered more objectively and transparently, and echoed the call made by the General Assembly in 2006 for greater use of logical frameworks for results-based budgeting in connection with special political missions.

Agenda item 133: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (A/61/771 and A/61/790)

23. **Ms. Pollard** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (A/61/771). As explained in the report (para. 1), the mandate of ONUB had been established by the Security Council in its resolution 1545 (2004). By its resolution 1692 (2006), the Council had decided to extend the mandate of ONUB until 31 December 2006 and had welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to establish, at the end of that period, an integrated office of the United Nations in Burundi. Accordingly, on 1 January 2007, the Operation had commenced its administrative liquidation, including the process of the disposition of its assets, to be completed by 30 June 2007.

24. The report was being submitted pursuant to regulation 5.14 (e) of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which stipulated that the donation of peacekeeping operations assets to the duly recognized Government of the host country required prior approval by the General Assembly.

25. The inventory value of the assets proposed for donation as at 15 February 2007 was $2,799,400, or 5.1 per cent of the total inventory value of the Operation's assets. The proposed donation of assets, comprising primarily prefabricated buildings, would enhance the operational capabilities of the Government of Burundi. Furthermore, owing to the landlocked location of the Operation, the cost of dismantling, refurbishing, packing and shipping the assets would render such transfer largely uneconomical.

26. The action to be taken by the General Assembly, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report, was to approve the donation of ONUB assets to the Government of Burundi.

27. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/790), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the donation of assets to the Government of Burundi.

28. **Ms. Pataca** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the African Group attached great importance to efforts to ensure lasting peace in Burundi. She paid tribute to the men and women of the United Nations for their contribution to those efforts and urged the international community to continue to support the reconstruction and development of Burundi. The African Group strongly supported the request of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the donation of assets to the Government of Burundi.

29. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that the proposed donation, however modest, would have a positive impact on both the efforts of his Government to build peace in Burundi and the public relations of the United Nations, which the Burundian people would remember every time they saw the buildings that ONUB had donated to them. He expressed appreciation for the proposed donation of assets, which he encouraged Member States to approve.

Organization of work

30. **The Chairman** drew attention to a letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly regarding a request from the Registrar of the International Criminal Court (A/C.5/61/19).

31. He recalled that, at the Committee's 38th meeting, a request had been made for a representative of the Office of Human Resources Management to provide an explanation as to why the Secretary-General would not be presenting to the General Assembly, at

the first part of its resumed sixty-first session, proposals to address the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as he had been requested to do in section XVII of resolution 61/244. In that connection, he invited the Director of the Operational Services Division to make a statement.

32. **Ms. Haji-Ahmed** (Director, Operational Services Division) recalled that, in section XVII of resolution 61/244, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to present to it at the first part of its resumed sixty-first session, in consultation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, proposals to address the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff in that Office and had decided to revert to the issue at the first part of its resumed sixty-first session.

33. It was her understanding that the Assembly's request was to be read in conjunction with resolution 61/159, entitled "Composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights", which had been adopted on the recommendation of the Third Committee. In that resolution, the General Assembly had decided, inter alia, to allow, in the effort to redress the specific geographic imbalance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the establishment of a temporary mechanism whereby recruitment of staff in the Office at the P-2 level would not be restricted to successful candidates from the national competitive examination.

34. On 22 January 2007, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had sent a memorandum to the Secretary of the Committee providing an explanation for the delay in the preparation of the report in question. The memorandum had been made available to the Bureau.

35. The Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights were working together to prepare proposals that would address the General Assembly's concerns, while respecting the relevant legislative mandates. The issues were complex and had required extensive coordination. Accordingly, the Secretariat had not been in a position to submit a report in time for it to be considered by the Committee at the first part of the resumed session.

36. She assured the Committee that every effort was being made to complete the preparation of the report, so that it could be considered at the second part of the resumed session, at which the Committee would also be considering a number of other reports relating to human resources.

37. **Mr. Berti Oliva** (Cuba) thanked the Director of the Operational Services Division for her explanation and expressed his hope that the report would indeed be ready in time for the second part of the resumed session.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.